

VOLKER DÖHNE. SEEKER AND FINDER

KUNSTMUSEEN KREFELD / KAISER WILHELM MUSEUM
16 NOVEMBER 2018 – 5 MAY 2019

Press conference: 14 November 2018, 11 a.m., Kaiser Wilhelm Museum

Opening: 15 November 2018, 7 p.m., Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
The artist is present

Volker Döhne's first large-scale museum retrospective *Seeker and Finder* provides visitors the opportunity to rediscover the previously little known oeuvre of this photographer and designer. Born in Remscheid in 1953, Volker Döhne was one of Bernd Becher's first students. He has been exploring his native region in North Rhine-Westphalia with the camera since 1976. With their clear visual language and precise thematic subject matters, his photographic series resemble sociological studies. His works sharpen the viewer's perception of everyday life as well as promote a sense of historical awareness. The *Seeker and Finder* exhibition will conclusively inscribe the work of Volker Döhne in the history of the Düsseldorf School of Photography.

The original objective, conceptual approach of the Düsseldorf School of Photography shaped between 1976 and 1997 by Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Düsseldorf Art Academy has been interpreted more broadly by the present-day fourth generation of photographers. It is hence all the more fascinating to rediscover an oeuvre spanning the decades from the 1970s to the present by a Becher student who was there from the beginning. From early on, Döhne lent a historical dimension and a touch of humour to Becher's objective documentary style. "Volker Döhne's photographs address the viewer directly with light-heartedness and a wink – breaking up Becher's severity and providing the work with a very personal dimension", says the show's curator, Sylvia Martin from the Kunstmuseen Krefeld. Döhne thinks in broad historical terms when pursuing traces of industrialisation using the example of workshops or focusing on an exceptional, albeit somewhat out-of-the-way architectonic structure, the outdoor toilet, which has now almost completely disappeared. While the photographs of colourful automobiles in urban settings now seem as if they had been staged, they provide an exacting image of society in the 1970s, a time when the car increasingly defined the public space and the signal colours were intended for safety purposes.

Employing balanced compositions and a depth of focus that also calls attention to the peripheral, Döhne is still analysing the public urban space between Oberhausen, Bonn and Kleve. In actual fact, he is carrying out sociological field research, inquires about historical connects and sharpens the perception of everyday living environments.

Seeker and Finder presents twelve series encompassing circa 150 photographs, thus offering an overview of the artist's oeuvre from the time between 1976 and 2018. A special chapter featuring circa 30 photographs is devoted to Döhne's occupation with modernist architecture of the 1920s based on Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Haus Lange and Haus Esters. Volker Döhne's work as a graphic artist will furthermore be highlighted for the first time with the presentation of his handmade artist books from the early 1980s as well as numerous catalogues, posters and exhibition invitations. In the words of Katia Baudin, the director of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld, "The interdisciplinary dialogue in which we as a civic museum wish to partake also shapes the work of Volker Döhne, where typography and photography are in harmony with each other".

With this first museum retrospective devoted to the work of Volker Döhne, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld continue with the examination and presentation of the Düsseldorf School of Photography that it began in the late 1980s with its first exhibitions of the works of Thomas Ruff, Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a booklet designed by the artist featuring texts by Volker Döhne as well as Katia Baudin, Martin Hentschel, Julian Heynen, Magdalena Holzhey, Thomas Janzen, Sylvia Martin, Eva Meyer-Hermann, Sabine Röder and Constanze Zawadzky.

An limited edition of three photographs from the 1979 *Ohne Titel (Bunt)* series will be issued on the occasion of the exhibition

Volker Döhne (born 1953 Remscheid) lives and works in Krefeld. He began attending the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 1975, where he studied photography with Bernd Becher (1975–1980) and design with Tünn Konerding (1978–1980). He was then worked as a photographer and graphic designer for the Kunstmuseen Krefeld until 2018. Volker Döhne has participated in such exhibitions as 2017 show *Fotografien werden Bilder. Die Becher-Klasse* at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt.

Curator: Dr. Sylvia Martin

Additional on view in the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum: *Collection Satellite#2, Bik van der Pol* and *Tailored for Freedom. The Artistic Dress around 1900 in Fashion, Art and Society.*

The exhibition is being generously supported by



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Printable graphical material for the exhibition can be found at our homepage.

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ADDRESS FOR VISITORS

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
Joseph-Beuys-Platz 1
47798 Krefeld

OPENING HOURS

Tue – Sun 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

For special opening hours on holidays, see www.kunstmuseenkrefeld.de

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